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IOWA DEPARTMENT OF NATURAL RESOURCES

Nov. 29, 2007
For immediate release

1. **City of Burlington makes commitment to update sewer system**
2. **Recreational use of streams and clean water loans on EPC agenda**
3. **Iowa DNR helps schools practice proper chemical management**

CITY OF BURLINGTON MAKES COMMITMENT TO UPDATE SEWER SYSTEM

NOTE TO EDITORS: Improvements like these to municipal sewage treatment systems will help reduce and prevent future wastewater bypasses.

MEDIA CONTACT: Dennis Ostwinkle or Paul Brandt, Washington DNR Field Office, (319) 653-2135.

BURLINGTON – The City of Burlington has signed a consent order with the DNR to update its sewer system over the next 18 years, making a major commitment to reduce wastewater entering the Mississippi River.

“Like our aging bridges and highways, the underground pipes that carry our wastewater to a treatment plant are also in need of upgrading,” said Richard Leopold, director of the DNR. “Some parts of Burlington’s system are more than 100 years old.”

He added that this agreement with the city and the Iowa Department of Natural Resources shows the importance the city places on improved water quality.

“We congratulate the city for taking the steps necessary to keep untreated sewage out of the Mississippi, one of our great recreational resources,” he added. “And, we want to recognize the city for working with our field office staff to protect Iowa’s waters.”

The major task facing the city is the separation of its combined sanitary and storm water sewer system which will reduce the volume of wastewater entering the treatment plant – and the river – when it rains.

A combined sewer system allows runoff from rainfall to enter and overwhelm the sanitary sewer system – which should carry only sanitary sewage. When that happens, the city's sewer system is not capable of handling the combined volume of wastewater and rainfall runoff. Consequently, untreated wastewater is diverted to the river.

The cost of the project could exceed $30 million dollars according to the city engineer. Once the systems have been separated, runoff from rainfall will enter the storm water sewer and discharge directly to a stream, river or lake because it does not require treatment.

Wastewater will enter the city's sewage treatment plant system and be treated before being discharged to the river.

Engineering and construction to separate the storm and sanitary combined sewers will begin in 2008 and is expected to be completed in 2025. The city will take bids for the first project by June 1, 2008, with construction expected to start shortly after that. Major construction at the Hawkeye Sewer Separation Phase IV should be completed by June 1, 2009. Work at the Market, Angular, South, and Locust Watershed sewer systems should be completed by Nov.1, 2025.

"We have really emphasized upgrading these combined sewer systems, because water quality is important to all Iowans. This is the second time that Iowa has signed an agreement with a city to separate its combined sewers," said Dennis Ostwinkle, supervisor of the DNR's southeast Iowa field office.

The agreement was finalized on Nov. 21, 2007.

The City of Muscatine has signed a similar agreement with the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency. The City of Wapello signed an agreement with the DNR in October.

Six more Iowa cities have combined sewer systems that need to be separated. They include Clinton, Des Moines, Spencer, Keokuk, Fort Madison and Ottumwa.

More information about combined sewer overflows can be found on the U.S. EPA's Web site at http://cfpub.epa.gov/npdes/home.cfm?program_id=5.

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RECREATIONAL USE OF STREAMS AND CLEAN WATER LOANS ON EPC AGENDA

MEDIA CONTACT: Karen Grimes at (515) 281-5135.

DES MOINES – Approval of a final rule that sets procedures to assess recreational uses of Iowa rivers and streams, and updates to the state revolving fund plan will be discussed at the Dec. 4 meeting of the Environmental Protection Commission in Des Moines.

Commissioners will be asked to approve a proposal that formalizes the data collection procedure used to assess recreational uses for Iowa waters. Recreational uses for Iowa's rivers and streams are considered when pollutant limits, specifically *E. coli* bacteria, are established for industrial and municipal discharges.

In other action, commissioners will be asked to approve additional projects for financing under the Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Funds. The funds provide low interest loans for projects such as municipal wastewater upgrades, public water supply improvements and soil erosion control.

"In previous years, the Clean Water State Revolving Fund was underused," said Patti Cale-Finnegan who coordinates the program for the DNR. "But improvements in the programs have helped get the funds working to protect water quality. This year alone we're adding more than $200 million worth of projects."

Commissioners will also elect officers at this meeting.

The EPC meeting will be held at the DNR Air Quality Building, 7900 Hickman Road, in Urbandale. Public comments are scheduled for 10:30 a.m. There are two demands for a hearing scheduled for the afternoon: at 1 p.m. a hearing for Kossuth County regarding a swine operation by Charles Kollasch, and at 2 p.m., a hearing for Poweshiek County regarding Prestage Farms LLC.

The full agenda is as follows:

- Approval of Agenda
- Approval of Minutes
- Director's Remarks
- Election of Officer(s)
- Solid Waste Alternatives Program – Recommendations
- Contract – American Computer Services, Inc. – One Stop Project Manager
- Amendment to Memorandum of Agreement– Nebraska Department of Environmental Quality – Homeland Security Planning and Exchanges
- Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Fund – FY 2008 Intended Use Plans Third Quarter Updates
- Clean Water and Drinking Water State Revolving Loan Funds Amended and Restated Joint Agency Agreement between the Iowa Department of Natural Resources and the Iowa Finance Authority
- Final Rule: Chapters 20, 22, 23, Air Quality Program Rules – Permitting Rules for Grain Elevators

- Final Rule - 567-61.3(8) adoption of Recreational Use Assessment and Attainability Analysis Protocol by reference
- Referrals to the Attorney General
  a) Lincolnway Energy, LLC (Nevada) – Wastewater and Air Quality
  b) Welch Oil, Inc. (Williams) - Wastewater
- Notice of Intended Action: Chapters 20, 21,22, 23, 25, and 33, Air Quality Program Rules - Updates, Revisions, and Additions
- Notice of Intended Action - Chapter 64 – Wastewater Construction and Operation Permits
- Demand For Hearing: Kossuth County regarding a proposed swine confinement operation by Charles Kollasch
- Demand for Hearing: Poweshiek County Prestage Farms of Iowa, LLC – P243 Finisher
- Contract Amendment – UHL – Use Assessments/Use Attainability Analysis
- Monthly Reports
- General Discussion
  - Report to Legislature
- Items for Next Month's Meeting
  - January 15, 2008 in Des Moines

More information about the agenda items can be found on the DNR Web site under Commissions and Boards at www.iowadnr.gov.

The members of the commission are Darrell Hanson, chair, Manchester; Charlotte Hubbell, vice chair, Des Moines; Suzanne Morrow, secretary, Storm Lake; Charlotte Hubbell, Des Moines; Henry Marquard, Muscatine; David Petty, Eldora; Ralph Klemme, LeMars; Susan Heathcote, Des Moines; and Paul Johnson, Decorah. One position is vacant. The director of the DNR is Richard Leopold.

Writer: Karen Grimes

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IOWA DNR HELPS SCHOOLS PRACTICE PROPER CHEMICAL MANAGEMENT

MEDIA CONTACT: Kathleen Hennings at (515) 281-5859

DES MOINES — The DNR has helped 81 Iowa schools have safer science classrooms, thanks to a grant from the U.S. Environmental Protection Agency (EPA).

Those schools have shown positive improvement after completing the School Chemical Management Project, which addresses hazardous chemicals in schools, according to Kathleen Hennings, a DNR environmental specialist.

“The project was designed to provide both middle and high school teachers and administrators with the information and resources needed to conduct micro scale chemical experiments in the classroom without having to purchase or store hazardous chemicals,” said Hennings.

The DNR’s Energy and Waste Management Bureau is reporting successful results after receiving a $75,000 grant in April 2005 through the EPA’s Resource Conservation Challenge

The DNR used grant funds to help 81 schools complete a school chemical management project. This project complements school chemical management training for teachers and administrators conducted by Metro Waste Authority and EMC Insurance.

The project was designed to provide teachers and administrators with the information and resources needed for quality instruction without having to purchase, store or dispose of large quantities of hazardous chemicals, according to Kathleen Hennings, DNR environmental specialist.

Schools that had already successfully completed school chemical cleanout and chemical management training were eligible to receive up to $900 for the purchase of chemical kits, aqueous parts washers, chemical management and educational supplies and a portion of hazardous chemical disposal costs.

According to data from the DNR’s report, 60 schools implemented the use of small scale chemical resources, 84 pounds of highly hazardous chemicals were removed from the classroom, four aqueous parts washers were installed and 52 schools purchased spill kits.

The project reduced the amount of stored unwanted chemicals in schools. It also lessened the hazardous nature of chemicals remaining in the classroom by switching to small-scale chemistry lessons, an introduction of safer alternative chemical management systems and a reduction in the need to reorder hazardous chemicals for lesson plans.

The DNR also provided each school a Chemical Management Guide for the Laboratory, outlining several content areas for future reference. The guide is available on the DNR Web site on its Household Hazardous Materials Educational page at www.iowadnr.gov/waste/hhm/hhmeducation.html and on the main HHM page under “Publications and Reports” at www.iowadnr.gov/waste/hhm/index.html

Writer: Kati Bainter

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